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ABSTRACT

This study describes and analyzes the emerging literacy of kindergartners in one bilingual classroom, and focuses on three Spanish-dominant Puerto Rican children in that class. Using a qualitative approach, the study investigated emergent literacy in the classroom, home, and church contexts. The unit of analysis was the literacy event, any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interaction with print and with other people who play the role of teacher. Networks of support available to the individuals and families were identified and described, and the nature of the teachers' roles and interactions were analyzed. It was found that in the classroom, the children participated in literacy events in both English and Spanish that combined phonics and meaning-making. It was in the classroom that the children had the most significant experience of reading for pleasure. At home, literacy was a necessary, highly valued, and highly significant skill used for instrumental, communicative, and religious purposes but not for pleasure. Parents tended to teach the children in didactic exchanges focusing on homework or religious texts. In religious settings as in homes, literacy was used for decoding, understanding, inherent meaning, memorizing, and reciting jointly. (Contains 24 references) (MSE)

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Literacy Events in the Homes, Churches, and Classroom of Bilingual Kindergartners: An Ethnographic Analysis

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Introduction: Questions and Conceptual Framework

Our study describes and analyzes the emerging literacy of kindergartners in one bilingual classroom and focuses on three Spanish dominant Puerto Rican children in that class. Using a qualitative approach, we investigate the emergent literacy of these three children in the classroom and also in their homes and churches. The unit of analysis we use is the literacy event, "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (Heath, 1983, cited in Cairney, 1998, p. 1). Within literacy events, we look at the children's interactions with print and with other people who play the role of teacher, whether they are a classroom teacher, Sunday school teacher, pastor, or a parent, peer, sibling, other relative, or family friend.

The main question guiding our research is:

What counts as literacy in the homes, churches, and bilingual classroom of three Spanish dominant, Puerto Rican children?

In particular, we ask:

1) Who are the teachers in the children's homes, churches, and classroom who support their emergent literacy?
2) What literacy events do the children participate in and /or observe and what are the characteristics of these events?
3) What do they believe about literacy and about their own role in the process?

We employ a multilayered approach to understand how literacy is constructed in social and cultural practices (Bloome & Theodorou, 1988; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Gregory, 1998). In the implementation of this approach, we use ethnographic techniques to situate the literacy events in their context (outer layer), researching the immediate and wider social context of the literacy event, including the literacy histories, beliefs, and practices of the families and the children (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995). We also use the techniques of the ethnography of communication to describe the components of the literacy event (middle layer) (Gregory, 1998). Finally, we use discourse analysis to uncover the structure of the communicative practices displayed in the literacy events (inner layer) (Santa Barbara Discourse Group, 1992). In this paper, preliminary findings are shared from the analysis of the ethnographic data from the outer and middle layers.

Our study draws from neo-Vygotskian theory in seeing children's development as embedded in a sociocultural process (Rogoff, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). We are attentive to how children experience culturally appropriate patterns of thinking in interactions between children and more competent members of their cultures. What has been distinctive in our investigation has been the expansion of the circle of attention beyond the mother and father to older siblings or peers (Gregory, 1998; Volk, 1997) and a network of people that extends beyond the home (de Acosta, 1994).

The primary unit of analysis used is the activity setting (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993). Activity settings are interactions characterized as goal-directed and collaborative, and by the presence of teaching and learning. Activity settings are composed of the elements of the context as well as by the social and cognitive aspects of the interactions (Weisner, Gallimore & Jordan, 1993). In studying literacy events as activity settings, we investigate how actors in the activity settings draw from elements of their cultural environment for their scripts, rather than highlighting either the interaction or the background. We study who is drawn into the interaction; and we analyze how a setting such as a Sunday school classroom shapes the interaction between child and teacher and between child and print.

Our study is grounded in an understanding of literacy that includes reading and writing as processes where meaning is constructed by children in interaction with print (Teale & Sulzby, 1989) and with people (Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith, 1984). We study the role that children play in constructing their own literacy along with their teachers (Dyson, 1997).

We contextualize literacy events by indicating how their social construction draws from available discourses, who is participating in the literary events, the tasks that are being performed (interactions that support literacy), the material resources and the language (Spanish, English or a combination of both) employed in the situation, and the cultural values and immediate motives (when accessible) that underlie the literacy practice.

The key question of our study on which we can peg all our other questions is, "What counts as literacy in the children's homes, churches, and bilingual classroom?" (Heap, 1991) Based on previous studies (Cairney, 1998; Gregory, 1996) we expected to find different ways of interacting with print, different goals in doing so, and different meanings ascribed to the process. We were particularly interested in understanding how people drew from beliefs they grew up with and ways of relating to the world they had acquired in their migration to the mainland. Were these beliefs kept apart? Were they blended? If so, how were they blended? (Duranti & Ochs, 1996).

Because literacy events are a kind of speech event in which "talk revolves around a piece of writing" (Heath, 1983, p.386), we found it useful to draw from research in the tradition of discourse analysis, in which tools and concepts from anthropology, linguistics, and sociology are combined in the study of written and spoken text. We are studying not only the structuring and organization of talk in the literacy events, but also how participants draw information from the immediate social communicative context (Cicourel, 1978). We are interested in showing how a common perspective on literacy develops in the classroom, how parents communicate their perspective on literacy and what children do and say in literacy events in the classroom and at home.

Our exploration of the context of children's emergent literacy at home was framed by a perspective in urban and economic anthropology that studies households as resource systems (Wallman, 1984). For the purposes of our study, resources were understood as those possessions that had the potential of leading to benefits for the child's literacy according to the child's adult caregivers.

We were particularly interested in how the families accessed other people for support, what knowledge they had, and what use they made of neighborhood resources that could support their children's literacy.

Using this framework we studied who belonged to the networks of support for the children's emergent literacy and their relationship to the family. We identified the particular members of the household that undertook or were allocated the management of particular resources regarding the children in our study (helping with homework, reading to the child, and similar activities).

We drew network maps of the individuals available to the family and noted how often the family saw them, and in what literacy-related activity they supported the child. The network maps denote both closeness/distance as well as joint activities. We also asked what teaching strategies and discourse patterns were used by members of these networks to support the children's emergent literacy.

The Community

The bilingual school and the homes we studied were located in two adjacent working class neighborhoods of a large midwestern city. Puerto Ricans have been coming to this city for work since after the Second World War, when jobs in industry were abundant. At present, Puerto Ricans represent about 7 % of the public school system enrollment.

Most of the Puerto Rican families concentrate in a few of the city's neighborhoods. The families in our study lived in two neighborhoods adjacent to the neighborhood with the largest concentration of Puerto Ricans. Both neighborhoods are characterized by one- and two-family dwellings. One of the neighborhoods has been the home of heavy industrial factories, many of them closed now, located close to rail lines. Both neighborhoods are predominantly white, one has 11 percent Latinos, the other 4 percent; of these the majority are Puerto Ricans. The educational level of the largest number of residents lies between "some high school" for one of the neighborhoods and "high school graduate" for the other. In the neighborhood where factories still operate, 35 percent of the residents are operators and laborers; in the other neighborhood, 32 percent are sales and clerical workers. Median household income was $12,676 in one neighborhood and $23,197 in the other (1999, http://little.nlink.netlink/mainframe.htm).

The Puerto Ricans who have been moving to this city since the late 40s have been making it, to some extent, an extension of their home community (Hannerz, 1987). A large Catholic church as well as both large and storefront Protestant churches with Spanish names, local supermarkets and Latino "bodegas" and bakeries, cars with Puerto Rican flags hanging from the rearview mirror, Spanish radio and TV stations have found a foothold in these neighborhoods. In many other ways, this city is not an extension of their home communities. It is cold and gray in winter; most of their families are not here with them; English is required for navigating the city and for many jobs. Two of the families talked about a time when they would return to Puerto Rico. They did not see their move to the mainland as permanent, but as a temporary stay, a sacrifice to get ahead.

The families in our study attended Latino churches in the community. At both of the churches that we observed, all the members of the congregation appeared to be Latino and the services and classes were held in Spanish. Although the activities during the services were similar, involving Bible reading, prayer and singing, the atmosphere at the two churches felt different. One important reason was the formality in dress and the prescriptions for women's attire: long hair, long sleeves, and long skirts at the Pentecostal church; more relaxed and informal dress at the other evangelical church, with several women wearing pants. Another reason was the length of the service. When we arrived at the Pentecostal church some time before ten, the congregation was already assembled and we could hear religious singing to a Caribbean beat. When we left at noon, activities in the sanctuary were to be continued. At the second church, the pastor lead a prayer and gave a short sermon, a member of the congregation read from the Bible while the others followed, there was singing, and the service concluded, followed by a social gathering.

Who are the teachers in the children's homes, churches, and classroom who support their emergent literacy?

The family teachers. The family networks extended beyond the boundaries of the nuclear family. A divorced mother with her three children, two boys (9 and 12 years old) and a girl in our study (Julializ, 6 years old) lived in one home. A 21-year-old brother was away at college. A couple from their church—referred to by the mother as a "hermano y hermana de la iglesia" ("church brother and a sister")--also lived in the home and came and went as part of the family. Another church brother, a young man from the neighborhood, visited frequently, often helping the older brothers with homework. The mother received AFDC funds and cared for young children in her home. Her married brother—who had 3- and 7-year-old daughters— was very close and helped in raising the children. In another household a couple, the uncle and aunt of the girl in our study (Fidelia, 6 years old), and their 7-year-old adopted daughter lived together. The child in our study was the daughter of the wife's brother and he visited the child frequently. Fidelia's aunt and uncle (to whom Fidelia referred as mother and father) both held blue-collar jobs. Relatives from out of state, a brother and his wife with their 1-and 3-year-old sons, had been living in the house for several months and later the man's father came to stay for a while. In the third home, a family of husband, wife and three boys (14, 15 and Manuel, the 6 year old in our study) lived on the first floor of the house, while a grandmother and her two sons (15 and 17) had been staying on the second floor for several months. The 17 year old had a girlfriend and baby who came to the house often. The father of the children worked as a butcher at a supermarket. The mother had recently found work as a cashier at a retail store. All three families spoke primarily Spanish at home; the three children in the study were learning English and spoke it occasionally at school, with siblings, and with neighborhood friends.

In the networks of people based in the children's homes, many people engaged with them, to a greater or lesser extent, in literacy events. In Julializ's home, her mother, 9- and 12-year-old brothers, uncle, and 7-year-old cousin all interacted with her in relation to print. For Fidelia, the group included her aunt and uncle, her 7-year-old sister, and the brother's wife. For Manuel, the network included his father and mother and his older brothers.

The church and Sunday school teachers. Two of the families belonged to evangelical Protestant churches and one belonged to a Methodist church. These churches were a main source of the interactions that the families had with non-kin relatives. Notably, fellow congregants were often referred to as "hermanos" and "hermanas." We were able to visit two of the churches and their Sunday schools: the Pentecostal Church attended by Julializ's family and the evangelical one affiliated with the United Church of Christ attended by Manuel's family.

The children participated in the adult services in both churches and also attended Sunday school classes in both as the adult services continued. The Sunday school classes were quite similar, resembling traditional school classrooms with a teacher directing instruction to children in a classroom setting. Julializ's class was taught by a woman who had been a teacher in Puerto Rico and had been unable to get a teaching credential on the mainland. Julializ's mother was the teacher's assistant.

At both churches, classes mixed children of different ages. Sunday school teachers at both indicated that they needed to teach in short lessons because their multi-aged classes were difficult to manage. Though we were unable to visit Fidelia's church or Sunday school, she described her class in some detail and it sounded similar to those we had observed

The bilingual kindergarten teachers. Lucia Martin, the classroom teacher, is a Puerto Rican who grew up in Puerto Rico and was educated there and on the United States mainland in Spanish and English. She is fluent in both languages. The year of the study she was in her seventh year of teaching. There were between 26 and 31 children in her all-day bilingual kindergarten; all native Spanish speakers with varying degrees of English proficiency. All were eligible for the free lunch provided for low-income families.

Classroom activities consisted of whole and small group lessons, independent work, and play with a range of materials. Almost all the activities involved the children actively in some way. Mrs. Martin contrasted herself to the parents, who, she explained, did not understand the role of play in young children's learning.

Though many activities were directed by Mrs. Martin, there were some in which the children worked independently or in small groups with peers on assignments or in one of the room's learning centers. In those child-centered activities, the children often functioned as each other's teachers. The year of the study, Mrs. Martin continued to experiment with ways the children could teach each other, asking individuals to lead routine group activities and assigning more capable children to assist less capable ones.

What literacy events did the children participate in and/or observe and what are the characteristics of these events?

With family teachers. At home, literacy events were embedded in the daily life of the families. Often these events took place in the kitchen or living room, with two or more people participating in the event while the room was abuzz with other activities—people playing Nintendo, reading the paper, doing homework, watching television, cooking, talking, and

babysitting to name a few. Although, on occasion, the children interacted with print by themselves, most of the time they did so with others, both young and old.

After school, the mothers often checked the materials the children brought home, reviewing what had been learned and helping children with homework or doing it for them. Sometimes the children brought in the mail and asked questions about it. They colored in coloring books, looked at story books, wrote what they had learned in school such as their names or the vowels, and looked at the Bible. They also ate, watched television, played inside with toys, or played outside with bikes or other equipment. The mothers, usually along with the children, read letters sent home from school and letters, usually accompanied by photographs, from relatives in Puerto Rico.

Literacy events were embedded as well in interactions with cousins and older siblings. Often these were play activities such as playing school or Nintendo. At other times the children did homework together, looked through old school materials, or quizzed each other about school knowledge (see Example 1 in the Appendix).

All three mothers reported that their children liked to read books and that they worked to sound out words and look for meaning using the pictures and their emerging awareness of print. Julializ had some story books of her own and some from the library as well as a set of workbooks her mother had purchased at the grocery store. She often completed pages in these workbooks with her mother's assistance, and struggled to sound out words in these and the storybooks. Sometimes her brothers or her 7-year-old cousin provided assistance. Julializ listened to books read by her mother at bedtime and by her uncle. Her mother also read the Bible with her, and sometimes with her brothers, every day (see Example 2 in the Appendix).

Manuel liked to look at the books he picked up at the library every Saturday. Although he relied on pictures to construct meaning, he also sounded out the letters when the books were in Spanish. His mother purchased coloring books for him, one with a Bible theme. The family read the Bible together and his father read him the Bible at bedtime. A large Bible was kept in the living room and Manuel studied the pictures alone and with his mother. At times, his older brothers helped with homework, though they were more likely to be outside with friends. Manuel's mother often introduced information or questions about letters into everyday activities (see Example 3 in the Appendix).

Fidelia liked to look at the pictures in magazines and make up stories and songs. Her uncle had taught her a poem that she said to herself at night in bed. He also read to her on occasion. There were a few children's books in her home, a few in her room and one lost in the basement. Her sister, just a year older and struggling in school, showed Fidelia her homework and gave Fidelia instructions for completing her's. A large armoire in the dining room held toys, a few old school books, and writing materials (see Example 4 in the Appendix).

The children also observed their parents using literacy for their own purposes. Julializ's mother read the Bible and prepared presentations for church, read mail and wrote letters, and ordered items from catalogues. She noted how difficult it was to get books to read in Spanish. Manuel's parents attended a church study group once a week and his mother took English classes

at a local community center. She read the mail—letters, store fliers, and bills--and wrote letters and studied how-to magazines for information that she used to decorate her home. Fidelia's uncle read the newspaper and sports magazines. He and her aunt had an address book by the phone. The aunt read the Bible to herself at night and read mail—letters and bills.

With church and Sunday school teachers. At both churches, literacy events involving reading and writing occurred in the sanctuary and in the Sunday school classroom. Most events were created by the pastor and the Sunday school teacher, though interactions with older youth and the children's mothers also involved literacy. At both churches, interaction with adults was in Spanish, although the children mixed English and Spanish when talking among themselves.

The Bible was the main text used in Sunday school and in the sanctuary. Children also interacted with the order of service and the hymnal when their mothers pointed to words for them to follow and often, read aloud with the congregation.

Memorization and public recitation of Bible verses and psalms were a significant part of the literacy events in which Julializ participated in the Pentecostal church.
We observed a special service for children and youth in the sanctuary where groups from this church and others read psalms, sang, and participated in activities. At one point, Julializ stood in front of the congregation with a microphone, sang by herself , and then read a psalm she had memorized from the Bible. Her mother stood facing her, giving directions. After the performance, her mother went up to the mike to provide a context for what the congregation had just witnessed. She told them that her daughter had wanted to be a part of church activity from a very young age and she described how Julializ had begged to read a psalm to the congregation when she was only four. Her mother explained that she had helped Julializ memorize the psalm so that she could hold the the book up and make believe that she was actually reading the words. The mother concluded that Julializ should be given a lot of credit for her efforts today since she was only six years old. These readings by Julializ in church were seen as a celebratory event, a sign of Julializ's potential "for great things."

In the services, activities for children and their parents, often involving literacy, were integrated into the service. For example, a mini lesson by the pastor in Manuel's church was followed by teaching and learning by parents and children in the pews. The pastor asked Manuel and the other children to come to the front of the sanctuary before they left for Sunday school. He read a verse from the Bible and commented, "Esa gente fueron llamados cristianos y nosotros nos conocemos desde ese día como cual." ["They were called Christians and from that day on we are known as such ."] He then handed out name tags and asked the children to write their names on them. The pastor added, "Tenemos una forma distinta de ser" ["We have a different way of being"]. He told the children to go back to their seats and tell their mother, father, and grandparents that they were Christians and invite them to be Christians too. When Manuel returned to the pews, his mother kissed him and asked him what he was. When he didn't respond, she prompted, "Un niño ¿qué?" ["A what kind of boy?"] He then answered "cristiano" and she commented "Muy bien" ["Very good."] and gave him another kiss. (fieldnotes)

The Sunday school activities we observed at both churches had commonalities. At Sunday school in the Pentecostal church, we observed the teacher conducting lessons about

psalms. She connected the meaning of the psalm to the children's everyday experience, asked questions about what the words in the psalm meant, and incorporated praying, pictures that illustrate the ideas, a cutting and pasting activity, and a song and dance to complete the lesson. A religious workbook was used for some of the activities; it was structured much like a secular workbook with pictures, text to read, hands-on activities, and specific objectives. The lessons were conducted for the large group, but while a few children sat in rows looking at the board, others played.

During Sunday school in the evangelical church, the children were told a Bible story and asked questions about it. As in the other class, a hands-on activity was used to concretely illustrate abstract ideas. Thus, Manuel and the others wrote on a heart to illustrate the idea that Jesus loved them. Occasionally, the teenagers in the group put on puppet shows for the others, there were birthday parties, and songs.

Though we were unable to observe Fidelia's Sunday school, she described the activities that were salient for her. These included coloring and playing with toys, writing and other school-like assignments.

With bilingual kindergarten teachers. While the school day was flexible, there was a basic pattern of activities and of literacy events embedded in these activities. When the children entered the room in the morning, they ate breakfast and then looked at books selected from the small classroom library. Next, the whole group gathered on the rug in front of the chalkboard for the morning message. Children were selected to help identify the month, day, date, and year, to describe the weather, and to count the number of boys and girls. Mrs. Martin then wrote a summary of this information, usually asking the group to identify letters or words in the message. She often employed a strategy that focused the children on identifying familiar words and the names of letters. One of her central literacy goals was to teach them that certain sounds were associated consistently with certain letters, a central concept of print that emergent readers must master. As she did below in the morning calendar activity, she had them identify words and letters within a meaningful context.

In constructing this strategy and others, Mrs. Martin frequently employed the recitation script that is typically used by teachers to assess children's knowledge (Volk, 1997). Most often the script is structured around a string of known information or assessment questions that aim to elicit correct answers from children without providing assistance. These questions are usually part of an Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) in which the teacher initiates the interaction with a question, the child responds, the teacher responds with an evaluation of the child's response, and then moves on to another question (see Example 5 in the Appendix).

Often, songs and games were added to the group time. Mrs. Martin read poems and chants that the children repeated after her chorally. At other times, Mrs. Martin read a book to the children that was related to the curriculum theme they were studying. The group might then retell the story or act it out. In a further extension of the book, children might be assigned to complete a related activity such as drawing ducks that were characters in a story and writing relevant words.

At center time, Mrs. Martin often conducted lessons with small groups focusing on specific numeracy or literacy skills while the other children worked independently. Intensive work with individuals was often embedded in these small group lessons. In these cases, Mrs. Martin was less likely to stick with the recitation script and more likely to scaffold the children's thinking and to provide explicit explanations about how to read (see Example 6 in the Appendix).

Children working independently might be assigned to centers or might make their own choices about working on the computers, in the writing center, the dramatic play corner, with blocks, manipulatives, sand, or with the other materials in the room. At times everyone was required to participate in special projects such as working on a class dictionary or writing capital and small letters on halves of Easter eggs. The morning usually ended with Mrs. Martin reading another book aloud.

After lunch, children again selected books to look at while others went to the bathroom. Journal writing occurred several times a week after the book reading. Most often, Mrs. Martin told the children to draw something in their journals related to a theme or book and then urged them to write words related to the drawing. Sometimes she met with groups and wrote their dictations in the journals. After outdoors play, the class returned to the room for a group lesson in science or social studies that involved discussion and related activities. The day often ended with another book read aloud by Mrs. Martin.

What do they believe about literacy and about their own role in the process?

The family teachers. To the parents, reading meant knowing letters and writing meant writing letters. This understanding of reading and writing was informed by how they had learned to read in Puerto Rico in the early primary grades. (None had attended kindergarten.) They all talked about the Cartilla Fonética: a booklet that uses the syllabic method, and, following the phonetic characteristics of the Spanish language, is used to teach reading through patterns of sounds (see pages from Cartilla Fónetica in Appendix). Manuel's father articulated this perspective clearly while describing how he learned to read.

Yo aprendí porque aprendí primero todas letras. Pues entonces como yo no sabía leer, la maestra me decía que uniera la, tu sabes, por pequeñas oraciones la...la[s] letras. Pues yo cogía, empezaba a decir los sonidos de cada letra allí rápido hasta que allí me salió, como aprender a leer.	I learned because I first learned all the letters. So then since I didn't know how to read, the teacher told me to put together the, you know, in little sentences, the...the letters. So I got it, I began to say the sounds of each letter there quickly until it came to me, how to read.

Manuel's mother saw other opportunities for children to learn to read. She was the only parent to describe emergent literacy in these terms.

Hay muchos nenes también que aprenden a leer cuando ven este, algo que le interesa mucho. O sea como decir, que si ven este que si ellos pues ven mucha Pepsicola pues ellos ya	There are many kids who learn how to read when they see this (indicates Pepsi can), something that really interests them. In other words, if they see this, if they see a lot of

saben que eso es una Pepsi y donde quiera que ven el sign saben que allí dice Pepsi.

Pepsicola then they already know that this is a Pepsi and wherever they see the logo they know that it says Pepsi.

When asked about their children's education and their role in the process, parents mentioned teaching their children to be well behaved and to respect their teachers. They also spoke about preparing their children for school. For some, that meant getting children to school on time, clean, and well-fed, but to others it also included helping with homework and actually teaching letters and numbers, addresses and phone numbers, and how to write their names.

Many of the parents' responses reflected the common Latino value of being "bien educado." Though this phrase literally means "well educated," in Latino cultures a person who is bien educado is schooled and has been well-brought-up to be respectful in interactions with others. Thus, being educated has both educational and moral implications. For these parents, then, the idea of education had a strong Christian component. They all strove to provide a Christian education for their children which would, in Fidelia's uncle's words, "...dirigirlos por el buen camino" [...guide them on the good road"].

For all the parents, this meant attending church and Sunday school. For Julializ's mother and Manuel's parents, educating their children also meant studying the Bible at home. Several times a week, family members sat together with their own Bibles, taking turns reading aloud.

Sometimes, the adults read to the children; at other times, the adults scaffolded the children's reading when they were familiar with the texts. Occasionally, parents asked questions about the meaning of what had been read and children answered with previously-learned responses, rather than their own interpretations or ideas based on their experiences. The Bible was understood to be the Word of God, and reading the text was done with God's assistance after thanking Him for His help.

The church and Sunday school teachers. Literacy events in church were an integral part of learning the Word of God, becoming a Christian and a member of the congregation. Toward these ends, the children participated in the adult services in the sanctuary and in activities designed especially for them, in the sanctuary and in the Sunday school.

Julializ's Sunday school teacher described her goals for her students as "understanding the Word." She explained that "the Word" was synonymous with "the Bible" and once during a lesson noted that "nos dice La Palabra ["The Word tells us."]. She also explained that it was important for the children to learn how to listen so they could participate in adult services. Though there were occasionally separate services for the children, they were usually part of the adult services, not kept separate as in other churches. The intent was that they learned together with the adults.

This teacher used a workbook from the denomination with lessons, objectives, and activities that she simplified to create her short lessons. While the teacher at Manuel's Sunday school did not explicitly describe her goals, the activities she carried out with the children were also meant to teach them about the Bible and to make them feel valued within the community. Other activities

were conducted because they were fun and kept the group, with its different ages and abilities, seated and busy.

The bilingual kindergarten teachers. In interviews, Mrs. Martin explained that she believed her students could be successful in school and that it was important for them to maintain and expand their Spanish as she introduced English. To achieve these goals, she created a comfortable but challenging atmosphere and organized concrete, active learning experiences to help children develop both languages. Most activities took place in Spanish and English was introduced in informal ways.

Mrs. Martin described her approach to early childhood education as "holistic" in that it dealt with the whole child and integrated different content areas and "constructivist" because she believed that children construct knowledge for themselves. Because she thought most of the children in her class lacked experiences and the language to describe them, she provided many experiences and helped children develop vocabulary and the ability to express themselves with words. Her emphasis was on developing these abilities in Spanish, the dominant language for most of the children.

Mrs. Martin explained that her approach to literacy integrated meaning-based and phonics techniques, sometimes in the same activities. She believed that making meaning was central to young children's emergent literacy as she helped them make sense of text and produce text that expressed their own ideas. She also felt that most of the children had had few experiences with literacy at home and needed both experiences with books and direct instruction in order to develop concepts of print, that is, a sense of reading, of books, of letters and words, and of the alphabet. Many activities emphasized letter-sound relationships, some in meaningful contexts, some in isolation. As one of a variety of activities, Mrs. Martin introduced the children to simple consonant-vowel syllables in Spanish with which they could build words. She felt this technique, grounded in the Cartilla Fonética used in Puerto Rico, helped children read a limited list of words quickly but was not helpful for figuring out unknown words. Thematic units and journals were used to provide meaningful contexts for listening, talking, reading, and writing. Overall, Mrs. Martin wanted the children to develop "a sense of what reading is about" and to learn that "there's something they can get out of reading."

Mrs. Martin's approach to literacy was responsive to the children's needs and interests and the directions they forged. For example, at the start of the year, she had the children get books to look at individually in the time after lunch because it seemed to be a flexible activity that could be conducted while groups were sent to the bathroom. She envisioned a version of "sustained silent reading" with children choosing and looking at books quietly on their own. But, Mrs. Martin explained, as the year progressed, the children "took it over and made it their own," converting the activity into "sustained cooperative outloud reading" as pairs and even whole tables looked at books together, reading them and discussing them at length—and talking about other topics. At any one moment, many books were being read outloud simultaneously (see Example 7 in the Appendix).

Similarly, journal writing was extended because of the children's interest. Originally, Mrs. Martin thought that the children would work individually for a short time in their journals.

But she gradually lengthened the time to almost an hour and began to sit and talk with groups of children about their writing after she noticed that they sat at their tables for long periods of time writing, talking about their writing—and other topics, and helping each other. Mrs. Martin described the evolution of these two literacy events with pride, highlighting her own responsiveness and flexibility and the children's control over their own literacy learning.

Conclusion

The children in our study were learning how to read in school and outside school within a network of support of family and other community members. In the classroom, the children participated in literacy events in both English and Spanish that combined phonics and meaning making. It was in the classroom that the children had the most significant experience of reading for pleasure.

At home, literacy was a necessary, highly valued, and highly significant skill. We observed the children using print materials for instrumental, communicative, and religious purposes rather than for pleasure. The texts used ranged from lists sent home by the teacher and letters from relatives to the Bible.

Parents tended to teach the children in didactic exchanges focusing on homework or religious texts. Older siblings or family friends were more likely to teach children in the midst of play activities or joint activities, and used a teacher-identified style with added language cues in Spanish and English. These styles were not mutually exclusive. The children's "teachers" assisted in many ways, they provided answers and cues including first sound, all sounds, vowel sound, picture, word in Spanish; they provided opportunities for shared reading and for the child to read with the teacher but a beat behind (neurological impress). They also engaged in repeated reading and individual oral reading. Furthermore, given the children's bilingualism, the teachers provided contrastive analysis of two languages, particularly graphophonic and semantic cues.

While educators and literacy experts advocate shared story book reading between parents and children as the key to literacy development, we found that at home reading for pleasure did not play a central role in the children's emergent literacy. Nonetheless, the children had abundant opportunities to interact with others about meaningful text.

Not only at home, but in religious settings, literacy was decoding, understanding inherent meaning, memorizing and reciting jointly with others. It was a way to get information (instrumental function), to communicate with others (social function) (Heath, 1986), and to gain access to God's word as a guide for living (religious function). Meaning was important, socially rather than individually constructed, non-negotiable, and not open to interpretation. Meaning was applied to life, but personal experiences were not brought to bear on text interpretation.

These preliminary findings illuminate the continuities and discontinuities among children's literacy practices in school and out of school. Understanding how bilingual children learn gives teachers the tools to create rich learning environments.

Appendix

nuestra CARTILLA FONETICA

Edición revisada y ampliada

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

m M

ma
mamá

mi ma - a ma - mí a - mí ma me
¡miau¡ - Mi mí - Me mo - Mo mo.

Mi ma má me a ma.

A mo a mi ma má.

Ma má me mi ma.

Ma má mi ma a Mi mí.

Ma má me mi mó.

Mí ma me ma má.

Mi mí a ma a ma má.

Mimí

4

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The following excerpts from the transcripts illustrate some of the literacy events described in our paper. We chose these excerpts to make our data "visible"; our goal was to display portions of literacy events so that readers might see the characteristics of the literacy events that we describe (Weade, Townsend, & Zygouris-Coe, 1996).

Transcription conventions and symbols include the following: empty parentheses ( ) indicate unclear speech; double slashes // // indicate overlapping speech; translations are in brackets [ ].

Example 1

This excerpt took place in June of the year of the study during the interview with Julializ's mother, Sra. Torres. The researchers sit with her in the living room. The young children she cares for play around them. While they talk, Julializ's cousin, Zoila (ZO), who has just completed first grade, helps Julializ (JU) read a list of words in English provided by the kindergarten teacher. The researchers ask the girls to continue for the tape recorder. Zoila helps Julializ by providing phonic cues in Spanish and English, sounding out letters in both languages.

ZO: La I (Eng letter name) es I (short I, Eng). [The I is I.]
JU: D. //D.//
ZO: //No// B.
JU: Bbbb.
ZO: Iiiigggg.
JU: Big. Little.
ZO: La O (Eng letter name) es U (short U, Eng). [The O is U.]
JU: To. Go.
ZO: P. A. (long A, Eng) //P.//
JU: //P//lay.
ZO: La O (Eng letter name) es. A (short O, Eng). [The O is. A.]
JU: Nnnn ot. Not.
ZO: U. I-U. (short U, I, Eng) Ruuuuuun.
JU: Run.
ZO: Oo. Ll ook.
JU: Look.
ZO: A. (short A, Eng)
JU: At. Me.
ZO: Y (long E, Eng). U (short U, Eng).
JU: You.
JU: A (long A, Eng). A (short U, Eng).
ZO: A A (short A, Eng).
JU: A (short A, Eng).
ZO: H A L P.
JU: Help.
ZO: La E. La E is (long E, Eng). //( )// [The E. The E is.]
JU: //Yo se.// Yo se todas esas partes. [I know. I know all these parts.]
JU: ¿Qué? ¿Aquí? [What? Here?]
ZO: Aja. [Aha.]
JU: Me. //Wh//e.
ZO: //Wh.//Wh-ere.
JU: Where.

ZO: I. (short I, Eng)
JU: It.
ZO: No.
JU: Is. Is.
ZO: Tu sabes todo esas partes. [You know all these parts.]
JU: I (short I, Eng). T. It. It. Aaa on.
ZO: No wh.
JU: One two three red blue yellow.
ZO: //Gr.//
JU: //Yo se.// Yo se. [I know. I know.] Green. Green. Orange.

Example 2

A demonstration of a Bible reading session, solicited by the research assistant, provides an example of a literacy event for religious purposes. Julializ (JU) and her mother (MT) begin by sitting side-by-side at the dining room table reading their own Bibles. Then Sra. Torres switches and they both read from Julializ's Bible on the table in front of Julializ. Mrs. Torres uses "mami' as a term of endearment for her child, Julializ calls her mother "mami"/"mommy."

The mother provides direction and context to the literacy event. Sra. Torres focuses Julializ's attention on the text and asks Julializ to follow with her finger. Sra. Torres realizes that they have begun reading without a proper opening—praying to ask God's permission to read his Word. Sra. Torres helps by reading one beat in front of Julializ, who repeats after her, and at one point asks her mother to slow down.

MT: Vamos a leer aquí. Vamos a leer el uno treinta y ocho. Aquí. Pero mira mami aquí porque es que tú te pones a mirar a mi //y tú no sabes// donde estamos leyendo. [Let's read here. Let's read 138. Here. But look here mami because you start looking at me and you don't know where we're reading.]
JU: //Nooooo.//
MT: (to research assistant) Ahora no quiere mirar para acá. Mami que tú no me sabes seguir mira aquí. Sigue con el dedito. Dice. Te alabaré. [Now she doesn't want to look there. Mami you don't know how to follow me look here. Follow with your finger. It says. I will praise you.]
MT: Pero se //olvidó// algo. ¿Qué se te-//qué se nos// olvidó hacer? [But you forgot something. What did you-what did we forget to do?]
JU: //( )// //( )//
JU: ((laughs)) Himno. [Hymn.]
MT: ¿Ah? No antes de leer. Antes tú leer la palabra ¿qué es lo que hay que hacer? [Huh? No before reading. Before you read the word what do you have to do?]
JU: Aaaa. Orar. [Pray.]
MT: Orar, ¿verdad qué sí? ¿Tú quieres hacer la oración? [Pray, isn't that right? You want to say the prayer?]
JU: ((exhales))
MT: Haz tú una oración, como tú sepas. [Say a prayer, like you know how.]
JU: Heh.
MT: Hazla mami como tú sabes. Que el Señor bendiga la palabra. [Say it mami like you know how. That the Lord blesses the word.]
JU: Hermano. [Brother.]
MT: //( )// la oración. [( ) the prayer.]
JU: //Hermano.// Hermano. Que el Señor le bendiga. [Brother. Brother. That the Lord blesses you.]
MT: Ora. [Pray.]
JU: //El aaaaa.// [The aaaa.]
MT: //Hablando a papá Dios.// Señor. [Speaking to daddy God. Lord.]

JU: Señor. [Lord.]
MT: Gracias. [Thank you.]
JU: Gracias. [Thank you.]
MT: Sigue. [Go on.]
JU: A Dios. [To God.]
MT: Por permitirme. [For letting me.]
JU: Por permitirme. [For letting me.]
MT: Leer Tu palabra. [Read your word.]
JU: Leer Tu-la palabra. [Read your-the word.]
MT: Te pido Señor. [I ask you Lord.]
JU: Te pido Señor. [I ask you Lord.]
MT: Que Tú me des sabiduría. [That You give me wisdom.]
JU: Que Tú me des sabiduría. [That You give me wisdom.]
MT: De lo alto. [From on high.]
JU: De lo alto. [From on high.]
MT: Y que Tú me bendiga. [And that You bless me.]
JU: Y que Tú me bendiga. [And that You bless me.]
MT: Bendiga a mi mamá. [Bless my mom.]
JU: Y bendiga a mi mamá. [And bless my mom.]
MT: A mis hermanitos. [And my brothers.]
JU: A mis hermanitos. [And my brothers.]
MT: A mi papá. [And my dad.]
JU: A mi papá. [And my dad.]
MT: Y a mi familia. [And my family.]
JU: Y a mi familia. [And my family.]
MT: Señor. [Lord.]
JU: Señor. [Lord.]
MT: Ayúdame. [Help me.]
JU: Ayúdame. [Help me.]
MT: Y Tus-y Tus angeles. [And Your-and Your angels.]
JU: Y Tus angeles. [And Your angels.]
MT: Que me acompañen siempre. [That they accompany me always.]
JU: Que me acompañen siempre. [That they accompany me always.]
MT: Amen gracias. [Amen thank you.]
JU: Amen gracias. [Amen thank you.]
MT: Ok vamos a leer. [Ok let's read.]
JU: Vamos a leer. // // [Let's read.]
MT: // // El 138 mami aquí mira. Sigueme con el dedo, ¿ok? Ay si tú me cambiaste la pagina. Mira aquí. Y aquí. 138. Y ala//baré.// [138 mami here look. Follow me with your finger, ok? Hey you changed the page on me. Look here. And here. 138. And I will praise.]
JU: //Alabaré.// [I will praise.]
MT: //Con todo mi corazón. Delante de los dioses, te cantaré salmos.// [With all my heart. Before the gods, I will sing psalms to you.]
JU: //Con todo mi corazón. Delante de los dioses, te cantaré salmos.// [With all my heart. Before the gods, I will sing psalms to you.]
MT: //Me pos//traré. [I will bow down.]
JU: //Me pos.// ¿Aquí ma? [I wi. Here ma?]
MT: Sí en la dos, allí mismo. [Yes in the two, right there.]
MT: //Me postrare hacia Tu santo templo.// [I will bow down toward Your holy temple.]
JU: //Me postrare hacia Tu santo templo.// [I will bow down toward Your holy temple.]
MT: //Y alabaré.// [And I will praise.]
JU: //Y alabaré.// [And I will praise.]
MT: //Tu nombre// por Tu misericordia y Tu fidelidad. Porque has engrandecido Tu nombre y Tu palabra sobre todas las cosas. El día que clamé, me respondistes. Me fortalecistes con vigor en mi alma.// [Your name for Your compassion and Your fathfulness. For you have exalted Your name and Your word over all things. The day that I called You, You answered me. You made me strong and bold in my soul.]

JU: //Y alabaré.// ( ) por Tu misericordia y Tu fidelidad. Porque has engrandecido Tu nombre y Tu palabra sobre todas las cosas. El día que clamé, me respondiste. Me fortalecistes con vigor en mi alma.// [And I will praise. ( ) for Your compassion and Your fathfulness. For You have exalted Your name and Your word over all things. The day that I called You, You answered me. You made me strong and bold in my soul.]
MT: Te alabarán. [They praise you.]
JU: No hagas rápido mami. [Don't go fast mommy.]
MT: Oh ok. I'm sorry.
MT: Mami por la cuatro. Aquí. Te. [Mami on the fourth. Here. You.]
JU: Te. [You.]
MT: Alabarán. [They will praise.]
JU: Alabarán. [They will praise.]
MT: O Jehova. [Oh Jehovah.]
JU: O Jehova. [Oh Jehovah.]
MT: Todos. [All.]
JU: Todos. [All.]
MT: Los reyes. [The kings.]
JU: Los reyes. [The kings.]
MT: De la tierra. [Of the earth.]
JU: De la tierra. [Of the earth.]
MT: Porque. [Because.]
JU: Porque. [Because.]
MT: Han oido. [They have heard.]
JU: Han oido. //¿Dónde?// [They have heard. Where?]
MT: //Los// dichos. [The words.]
JU: ¿Dónde? [Where?]
MT: Aquí. Porque han oido. [Here. Because they have heard.]
JU: Porque han oido. [Because they have heard.]
MT: Los dichos. [The words.]
JU: Los dichos. [The words.]
MT: De Tu boca. [Of Your mouth.]
JU: De Tu boca. [Of Your mouth.]

The Bible reading continues in this way for awhile.

Example 3

This excerpt took place in March. One of the researchers visited the home after school and is with the mother (DH) and Manuel (MN), when the mother looks in the child's backpack for notes from the teacher and for Manuel's work. She explains what he has done wrong on a worksheet. Manuel calls his mother "Ma" and his Dad "Pa."

MN: //Ma?// [Mom?]
DH: //( )// un poquito para //( )//. [//( )// a little for //( )//.]
MN: Ma pa no te //( )//. [Mom Dad didn't //( )//.]
DH: Qué? [What?]
MN: Papi no está aquí. [Dad is not here.]
DH: Tu papá no. [Your Dad no.]
MN: Está en Pol to. [He is in Pol to.]
DH: En Puerto Rico. Puerto, Puerto Rico. [In Puerto Rico. Puerto, Puerto Rico.]
MN: Puerto. Puelco, Puerto. [Puerto. Puelco, Puerto.]
DH: Se fue casi una semana y está loco. [He left almost a week ago and is going crazy.]
DH: Vamos a ver. [Let's see.]
MN: Esto. [This.]

DH: (looks at homework) Vamos a ver //( )//. [Let's see //( )//.]
MN: Es de esta letra. [It's about this letter.]
DH: Ajá, y cómo se pronuncia esta letra? [Aha, and how do you pronounce this letter?]
MN: Ch ch ch.
DH: //( )//
MN: Ere.
DH: Si, cómo se pronuncia y cómo se eh cómo, la eh la pronunciación, cómo es qué hace? [Yes, how do you pronounce, how do, eh how, how eh the pronunciation, how do you do it?]
DH: Si, así que ella oigo que yo no lo oigo. [Yes, so that she hears that I do not hear you.]
MN: //( )// (sound like dddd)
DH: Rrrrrr rrrrana. Rrrastrillo. Rey, rueda, reloj y rosa. [Frog. Rake. King, wheel, watch and rose.]
MN: Y columpio. [And swing.]
DH: Sí, pero columpio no se dice con erre. Yo te dije, las que se dicen con erre. Viste! por eso tú no tienes ésta en un círculo! Tú lo viste-tu lo pusiste en un círculo ésta? [Yes, but swing does not begin with r. See! That is why you did not circle it. See-did you circle this one?]
MN: No. Aquí. [No. Here.]
DH: Aaaaah viste? [Ah see?]
DH: La efe. [The letter f.]
MN: Ma yo quiero //( )//. [Mom I want //( )//.]
DH: //Tú tienes que// pintar más que la efe. Verdad? Los mismos colores y la pintaste de colores. [//You have to// color more than the letter f. Right? The same colors and you colored it.]
MN: Uno. [One.]
DH: Oh sí, para saber que es la efe, mira! Yo te voy a hacer la //( )// en un papel y tú verás que te vas a dar cuenta. Que si tú pintas éstos del mismo color tú vas a darte cuenta que es una efe. Pero ahora tú no te das cuenta. [Oh, yes, to know that it is the letter f, look! I will make an F on paper and you will realize. If you color these the same color you will realize that is an f. But now you don't realize.]
MN: Ajá! Yo me dí cuenta! [Aha! I knew!]
DH: Ya, tú te das cuenta sí, pero otras personas, no. Tú ves, ésta porque ésta //( )// pero ésta no. Es, que ésta la que? [You know, but other people don't. You see, this because this //( )// but not this. What is this?]
MN: La. [The.]
DH: La qué? [The what?]
DH: La efe qué? [The f what?]
MN: Laaaa grande. [The big one.]
DH: Cómo se dice? [How do you say it?]
MN: (laughing) Mo cola. [Upper case. [mispronounced]]
DH: Mayúscula, y ésta? [Upper case, and this one?]
MN: Minúscula. [Lower case.]
DH: Es exactamente. [Exactly.]
DH: Y Manuel hiciste esa ele, bien pequeña. [And Manuel you made that l, very small.]
MN: Cuál ele? [Which l?]
DH: Bien pequeña, y tu no-nombre no se escribe con esa ele tan chiquita. Tiene que ser más larga, más alta. [Very small, and your name is not written with such a small l. It has to be longer, taller.]
MN: Ma? [Mom?]
DH: Mjm. [Mhm.]
MN: Yo te dí eso. [I gave you that.]
DH: //( )//.
MN: Qué? [What?]
DH: (reading note) Viernes para el lunes no hay clases este viernes. Todo ésto es de la semana pasada. [Friday for Monday there are not classes this coming Friday. All this is from last week.]
DH: Déjalo afuera es de la semana pasada. [Leave it outside it's from last week.]
MN: Mmm quiero pintar un libro. Pero no me gustan los libros que tengo. [Mmm I want to color a book. But I don't like the books I've got.]
DH: Muchacho y todos los que tienes, no te voy a // comprar//. [Boy and with all the ones you've got, I'm not going to //buy//.]
MN: //Wow// que montón! [//Wow// which ones!]

DH: Y el gordo el libro gordo-y la biblia que te compramos hace poco. Esos fueron los últimos que //( )//.
[And the fat the fat book-and the bible we bought not long ago. Those were the last ones that //( )//.]
MN: Se me perdió. [I lost it.]
DH: Mmmm.
DH: Pues, vamos a ver si te portas bien. Yo te lo compro. [Well we'll see if you behave. I will buy it.]

Example 4

A worksheet prepared by Felicidad (FG), Fidelia's cousin, while we were interviewing the family about their literacy practices, provides an example of a child displaying what she knows. Felicidad prepared this worksheet to show us how she helped Fidelia when they did homework together. The sheet, strikingly similar to school worksheets, contains a column with pictures to be used as clues for the words Fidelia was to read. For the mother's name, the cousin wrote the word "mama," instead of drawing a picture. Felicidad stood next to Fidelia and pointed to the picture and then to the word as she asked Fidelia to read for us. The way in which the information was solicited and displayed mimicked typical teacher-student exchanges in school.

comida [food]

Eva [Eva]

niña [girl]

Maesra [teacher] (misspelled)

rojo [red]

gato [cat]

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Example 5

Example 5 is an excerpt from a literacy event that took place in February. Since September, the class had begun most mornings by reviewing the month, year, day, and date on the calendar. On this occasion, Mrs. Martin (LM) begins this routine by asking who would like to be the teacher. She then selects Eliza (EL) who is one of the most competent readers in the class. Note how she prompts Eliza to use the teacher questions, reserving the evaluation of responses and the comments on behavior for herself.

LM: ¿Tú quieres tratar Eliza? Que Eliza es la maestra. Y ¿qué qué se hace con la maestra? Hay ¿qué? Mirarla ¿verdad? Ok dale. ¿Qué tú le tienes que preguntar? ¿A los nenes? ¿En qué mes? Preguntale "¿En qué mes estamos?" [Do you want to try Eliza? Eliza is the teacher. And what what do you do with the teacher? You have to what? Look at her, right? Ok, start. What do you have to ask? The children? In what month? Ask them "What month are we in?"]

EL: ¿En qué mes estamos? [What month are we in?]

CH: Febrero. [February.]

LM: ¡Ah! ¡Alzando la mano! Tú llamas al que tú quieras. ¡Di "Daphnis!" [Ah! Raising your hand! Call on anyone you want. Say "Daphnis!"]

EL: Daphnis.

DA: Febrero. [February.]

LM: En febrero muy bien. Haz las letras ahora. Diles "Díganme las letras del mes febrero." [In February very good. Do the letters now. Say to them, "Tell me the letters of the month February."]

EL: Díganme las letras. [Tell me the letters.]

LM: ¡Díganselas! [Say them!]

EL: (points to letters with pointer) //F E B R E R O.// (names letters in Spanish)

CHN: //F E B R E R O.//

LM: Di "Y ¿qué mes es?" [Say "And what month is it?"]

EL: ¿Y qué mes es? [And what month is it?]

CHN: ¡Febrero! [February.]

LM: Ok ahora el de inglés. Di "¿Cómo se dice en inglés? [Ok now in English. Say, "How do you say it in English?"]

CH: February!

CH: February!

LM: Ok haz las letras ahora. Hagan las letras. [Ok do the letters now. Do the letters.]

CHN: F E B R U A R Y. (name letters in Spanish)

LM: Muy bien.... [Very good. ...]

Example 6

The following example takes place during another literacy event, later the same day. In this instance, Mrs. Martin is working with a small group of children who all hold books they have made modelled on a big book read previously by Mrs. Martin to the group. On each page, the children have pasted a strip with the phrase "Un pastel _____" ["A _____ cake."] and a picture of a cake. They have colored the cake and then cut out the color word and pasted it in the blank. The children are, thus, able to read each page if they can identify the color of their cake, recognize the pattern of letters, and understand the concept of print mentioned above that a certain pattern of letters is associated with certain sounds. When it is Fidelia's (FI) turn she gets stuck, unable to identify which word is "un," which is "pastel," and which is the name of the color. She confuses words and letters.

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In demonstrating to Fidelia that each repetition of the same letters represents the same word, Mrs. Martin elaborates on the strategy described above of identifying familiar letters and words. However, she abandons the recitation script when she realizes that Fidelia does not understand this basic concept of print. Since Fidelia is unable to answer her questions correctly, she provides assistance that scaffolds Fidelia's thinking, attempting to make the relationship between letter and sound patterns explicit. Near the end of this excerpt Mrs. Martin involves the entire group physically in pointing to the letters as she writes them. Eventually, Fidelia is able to identify the words correctly.

It is also interesting to note Mrs. Martin's explanation of the Spanish synonyms for "cake," "pastel" and "bizcocho." "Pastel" is the word used in the book that has been printed in Mexico. Mrs. Martin uses "bizcocho" about half way through the excerpt and is questioned about its use by Fidelia near the end. "Bizcocho" is the word used in Puerto Rico that is most familiar to the children.

LM: ...Ok Fidelia lee. [Ok Fidelia read.]
FI: Un pas//tel.// [A cake.]
LM: //¡Ahah!// Dedito. Un. [Uhuh! Finger. A.]
FI: (points to un) Pas//tel.// [Cake.]
LM: //¿Dónde// está la palabra pastel? [Where's the word cake?]
FI: (points to un) Aquí. [Here.]
LM: (points to un) No, ¿qué palabra es ésa? [No, what word is that?]
FI: La ( ).[The ( ).]
LM: ¿Qué palabra-ok ¿dónde está un? (points to un) Esa es la primera palabra. Despúes de un ¿qué viene? [What word-ok where is a? That is the first word. After a, what comes next?]
FI: Un. [A.]
LM: (points to pastel) ¿Qué palabra es ésta? [What word is this?]
FI: Un. [A.]
LM: Fidelia. Estas diciéndolo una y otra vez. Estás haciendo un patrón. (points to words) Un pastel un pastel mira aquí dice un pastel un pastel. Un. Pastel. Un. Pastel. Esta palabra aquí estas letras juntas hacen la palabra pastel. ¿Qué palabra es ésta? [Fidelia. You're saying it over and over. You're making a pattern. A cake a cake look here a cake a cake. A. Cake. A. Cake. This word here these letters together make the word cake. What word is this?]
FI: Pa. Un pas. [Ca. A ca.]
LM: (points to pastel) No aquí no dice un, aquí dice ¿qué? [No here it doesn't say a, here it says what?]
FI: Un pa. [A ca.]
LM: (points to words) Ahí dice pastel. Aquí dice un. (points to rojo) Y ¿qué palabra es ésa? [There it says cake. Here it says a. And what word is that?]
FI: Rojo. [Red.]
LM: Rojo. El bizcocho es rojo y la palabra es rojo. (points to un) ¿Qué palabra es ésta? [Red. The cake is red and the word is red. What word is this?]
FI: Un. [A.]
LM: Un. (points to pastel) ¿Qué palabra es ésta? [A. What word is this?]
FI: Uuu. Sss.
LM: ¿Con qué empieza? ¿Con qué letra? [What does it begin with? With what letter?]
FI: P. Uu.
LM: No se mueven las palabras. No se han movido ésa es la misma palabra que dijiste ahorita. Tu me dijiste que esto es un ¿qué? ¿Qué es eso? ¿Un? [The words don't move. They haven't moved that is the same word you just said. You told me that this is a what? What is that? A?]
FI: Uuu.
LM: ¿Qué es eso? [What's this?]
CH: Un pastel. [A cake.]

LM: ¡Pastel! Esto es pastel. Esto se llama pastel. [Cake! This is cake. This is called a cake.]
FI: Esto es bizcocho. [This is cake.]
LM: Un bizcocho esto esto es bizcocho pastel y bizcocho es la misma cosa. Esta cosa aquí. [A cake (Puerto Rican word) this this is a cake cake (Mexican word) and cake it's the same thing. This thing here.]
CH: ( )
LM: Búscame. No búscame un magic marker. Ven acá Fidelia. Todo el mundo póngame su dedo bajo la palabra pastel. Pastel con qué empieza pastel? [Find me. No find me a magic marker. Come here Fidelia. Everyone put your finger under the word cake. Cake what does it begin with?]

Example 7

The following example from the classroom took place later the same day during a literacy event that Mrs. Martin called "sustained out loud cooperative reading." Originally a time for quiet, individual reading, this event had been transformed by the children into a time for pairs and groups sitting around tables to look at, read, and discuss books together. Example is an excerpt that begins with Fidelia and Eliza looking for a book. When Fidelia finds it she gives it to Eliza who begins to read by describing the pictures in a "reading" voice and playing the role of teacher as she reprimands Fidelia for interrupting. The girls then construct the story together, using strategies that focus on their comprehension—the meaning of the story—rather than on the letters and sounds. Their understanding of how books and stories work is evident.

Half way through, Fidelia starts to look at another book. Eliza continues reading in the background and others talk and read around them. Like Eliza, Fidelia concentrates on the pictures in the book. In contrast, she labels what she sees, using the vocabulary she is learning in school, rather than producing connected text as she has done with Eliza.

Like many literacy events in the children's homes, this event is a joint activity with several participants and much overlapping talk. Interestingly, it brings together Eliza who has been selected earlier by Mrs. Martin to lead a lesson because of her reading ability and Fidelia who has struggled so hard to connect sounds to letters. In this event, they are able to work together to create a story, even while Eliza signals that she is the teacher. Her confidence and enjoyment are communicated.

FI: Ahorita había un libro. [Now there was a book.]
LM: (sends group to bathroom)
FI: Esto. Ahorita había un libro adentro. ( ) solo metido. [This one. Now there was a book inside. ( ) alone inside.]
EL: Mira ( ). Mira que ( ). [Look ( ). Look ( ).]
FI: Déjame ver si lo encuentro. (looks for book) [Let me see if I can find it.]
FI: (finds book, laughs, chants words) This one! La gall-. Eso yo iba a coger. [The chi-. I was going to get this one.]
FI: ¡Ay! Excuse me! Ah.
FI: ¡Ah! (laughs)
EL: (opens book, uses reading voice) Estaba lloviendo de nieve. [It was raining snow.]
EL: (turns page) Y. Ella ( ). Ella tenía una gato. [And. She ( ). She had a cat.]
FI: (laughs)
EL: Y que lo. Que lo quiere, lo ama. Lo ama Luli. [That. That she loves, she loves. She loves Luli.]
FI: (laughs) Y que Luli se llamaba el gato. [And Luli was the cat's name.]
EL: Ella pensaba. Ella pensaba. //( ) //gato. [She thought. She thought. ( ) cat.]

FI: //En dónde estaba su //gatito. Pero en dónde estaba su gatito. Puso unos bizcochitos. ¡Acúerdate! [Where her kitten was. But where her kitten was. She put out some cookies. Remember!]

EL: Ay nena. Se perdió su gatito y punió (sic) un bizcochito. //( )// que si alguien quería ( ) un bizcochito a su gato le llevaba-le llevaba a ver si co-si comieron la cosa. [Oh girl. She lost her kitten and putted out a cookie. So if anyone wanted ( ) a cookie to her cat they took-they took it to see if they had eaten the thing.]

FI: //( )//

FI: Si encontraba otro animalito le salió uno grande. [If she met another animal, a big one came out.]

EL: Ay nena no hables. Y se fue, ella pusió (sic) dos más bizcochitos. ( ) Que. Ay Lito mira. [Oh girl don't talk. And it went, she putted out two more cookies. ( ) So. Oh Lito look.]

EL: Ella punió (sic) un bizcochito. Pero vinieron y vinieron. ( ). [She putted out a cookie. But they came and came.] (continues to read)

FI: (moves away, gets book about colors) El nuevo libro. O sí. El nuevo libro. [The new book. Oh yes. The new book.] (noise, others talking, EL reading in background]

CH: Grande para mi. [Big for me.]

FI: Un nuevo libro. Una gallinita linda. Si la gallina ¡yellow! ¡rojo! ¡orange! [A new book. A pretty little chicken. If the chicken yellow! red! orange!]

LM: (tells a group to go to bathoom)

EL: (reads in background)

FI: El nuevo. La gallinita era ¡(ping)! Mira ¡(ping)! gallinita. Yo soy ( ). (Ping) gallinita. (Ping). Era la gallinita. Era rojo aquí orange. Yellow. [The new one. The little chicken was ( ). Look ( ). I'm ( ). ( ) little chicken. ( ). It was the little chicken. It was red here orange. Yellow.] (continues with book, hard to hear.)

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